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ABSTRACT

Difficulties inherent in the dual classification of gifted and learning disabled are analyzed, and research on the issue is reviewed. The Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Model is used to identify problems in service provision for gifted/learning disabled students. Areas of concern are listed and then expanded by using the five steps of the CPS model: (1) fact finding, (2) problem finding, (3) idea finding, (4) solution finding, and (5) acceptance finding. In the final step, general sources and types of assistance and resistance to acceptance are listed under the categories of money, availability of resources, availability of parents, knowledgeable persons, and implications of research. For example, under availability of resources, researchers are identified as possible sources of assistance in the form of diverse research, materials and information. (CL)

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Creative Problem Solving for Gifted/Learning Disabled

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Creative Problem Solving

for Gifted/Learning Disabled

Students that appear the have needs for special education services in more than one area presents a problem for educators, administrators and parents. The field of gifted education is one area in which dual classification exists and needs more attention. Educators in the field have recognized the need for the identification and services to be provided for gifted students with learning disabilities. However, many educators and lay persons maintain the attitude that the Gifted/Learning Disabled identification is contradictory and therefore does not exist as a separate or coexisting classification.

Literature pertaining to the Gifted/LD was relatively non-existent prior to Krippner's (1964) article on reading disabilities among the gifted. The Krippner article noted several reasons for explaining reading disabilities within the gifted population. Both physiological and socio-cultural problems were mentioned. Krippner (1964) stated that disorders may be present in the peripheral or central nervous systems or in the enocrine system. There may also be social, emotional, or environmental conditions which interfere with Gifted students' learning. In addition, Wepman cited in Krippner (1964) stated that Gifted children exhibiting poor visual memory, visual discrimination, and visual-motor coordination are handicapped in classes which stress the "sight method" of reading. On the other hand, Rabinovitch cited in Krippner (1964), described Gifted children, "handicapped" by the following conditions: endocrinal malfunctioning, social immaturity and environmental deprivation, neurotic disturbances, psychotic and sociopathic tendencies, parents exploitation of their children's giftedness by pushing them too hard, and unfavorable educational experiences (Krippner, 1964).

It was not until the mid 1970's when discussions at conferences addressed the Gifted handicapped that overt concern was expressed for this population. In 1975, a Talents and Gifts (TAG) Committee on the Gifted Handicapped was formed. Throughout the 1970's publications addressed various aspects of the Gifted/LD student. Elkind (1973) discussed problems of identifying the Gifted/LD at the Annual Convention of the National Association for Gifted Children. In addition, he suggested that educational programs be constructed to capitalize on the students strengths while at the same time compensating for their weaknesses. Abroms (1972) in an article entitled Gifted and Learning Disabled, supported the use of the Guilford Structure of the Intellect (SI) model for the Gifted/LD. Abroms stated that when a student's performance is consistent within one specific content area but highly discrepant within another, the possibility for the relationship of giftedness to learning disabilities exists.

Current literature addressing the Gifted/LD stresses the curriculum needs of high ability students. The curriculum should provide challenging yet realistic goals for the Gifted/LD. Diverse, yet appropriate curriculum must extend beyond what the student has already accomplished in order to explore and foster the uncharted areas sparked by curiosity and creativity. French (1982) suggested that in working with Gifted/LD students it is best to involve the utilization of several skills; such as cognitive, memory, and perceptual skills in the remediation process. The instructional program should be structured so that students'

areas of strength such as language (verbal and non-verbal), memory (long and short-term), and abstract thinking are utilized in the traditional curriculum.

A review of literature addressing Gifted/LD supports the idea of dual identification; it can no longer be ignored. However, recognition does not mean initiation of service. There are a number of approaches to initiate services for the Gifted/LD student. One way to assure appropriate services is to assume there is a situation requiring unique attention for this special population. A practical application of Creative Problem Solving (C.P.S.) has been used to further extend the C.P.S. model noted by Firestein and Treffinger (1983).

The C.P.S. model was used by authors in order to identify problems that interfere with the services that should be provided for Gifted/LD students. Initially the authors listed areas of concern in providing services to this unique population (The Mess). Each area of concern was then expanded by using the five steps of the CPS model: fact finding, problem finding, idea finding, solution finding, and acceptance finding. The following information presents the results of our efforts utilizing the C.P.S. model.

The Mess -

- Administrators attitude toward special education and changes in special education
- Lack of generic special education programs
- Problem of specialized vs. generic training
- Teachers attitudes toward mainstreaming
- Problems of assessing and identifying Gifted/L.D.
- Re-evaluation process
- Identification of Gifted/L.D.
- Lack of knowledge of Gifted/L.D. category
- Teachers trained to deal with only one category of exceptionality
- Teachers lack of knowledge to deal with Gifted/L.D.
- Training programs concerned with Gifted/L.D.
- Undergraduate vs. graduate education/training

Fact Finding

- Information gathering about Gifted/L.D. situation
- Opionions of information gatherers/researchers
- Problem of too many exceptionalities in one classroom
- Some educators (i.e. administrators, teachers, other educational personnel involved) say that a definition for Gifted/L.D. is hard to come by
  ...that there is no such thing as Gifted/L.D.
  ...that there is no time to deal with special educators
- Generic training may not be adequate to use with Gifted/L.D. that takes away from specialized training
- Inability to keep up with current research in two specialized fields
- Educators look at research in Gifted/L.D. skeptically
- There is a need for a Gifted/L.D. prgram
- Attitudes of Gifted teachers...the number of persons, if indeed they exist, would be too small to be feasible to have their arrin program

- Attidues of some other educators...Gifted/LD programs may not be feasible due to lack of research done on subject and knowledge of subject
- Why are Gifted/L.D. hard to identify?
- Identifying objectives of Gifted/L.D. program
- Identification of Gifted/L.D. could cause confusion in the present classification system
- Gifted/L.D. programs should be included under PL-94-142
- What techniques are available to identify and assess Gifted students L.D.?
- No organization exists to represent Gifted/L.D.
- There is no current movement by parents of Gifted/L.D. children

Problem Finding

- In what way might adding more special education courses improve the undergraduate or graduate programs
- We should offer information to administrators to inform them about Gifted/L.D. through inservice training, seminars, pamphlets, brochures, available research (resources), conferences, etc.
- We feel there is a need to serve Gifted/L.D. population
- To improve/provide better services for Gifted/L.D.
- In order to fulfill the requirements of PL-94-142
- To increase awareness of administrators concerning existence of Gifted/L.D. as an exceptionality to be dealt with
- To offer a broader services spectrum to the community at large (use of state monies, appropriateness of services)
- Problem dealing with administrator attitudes toward Gifted/L.D.
- Provide teacher training at the undergraduate level
- Inservice and professional training
- Theory vs. practice
- Administrators feel there is no such thing as Gifted/L.D. category

Idea Finding

- Develop guidelines for classifying Gifted/L.D.
- Develop professional training opportunities for administrators
- Develop case studies to present to administrators
- Need for grant funds for research and program development
- Visitation to Gifted/L.D. programs
- Media e.g. film strips, videotapes, commercial materials
- Parent group to represent Gifted/L.D.
- Conference/Inservice on Gifted/L.D. for administrators
- Material/Media Dissemination center
- Research to develop techniques for assessing and identifying Gifted/L.D.

Solution Finding

Criteria-

- Availability of knowledgeable people in the field
- Results of research

Criterion (cont.)

- Prevalence of Gifted/L.D.-Number identified or needing services
- Evaluation of current Gifted/L.D. program designs
- Number of successful Gifted/L.D. programs
- Building/Room availability
- Systematic organization of materials on Gifted/L.D.
- Test instrument evaluation

Acceptance Finding

MONEY

- Assistance - Who?
  - Administrators
  - SRS
  - National Organization e.g. CEC
  - State education agency
  - Local education agency
  - Lobby
  - Congress
  - Local organizations e.g. Lions, Kiwanis
- Assistance - What?
  - Write grant proposals
  - Research
  - Speak to lobby group/national organization
  - Get support of parents, administrators, and lay persons
- Resistance - Who?
  - Administrators
  - Congress
- Resistance - What?
  - Inavailability of monies
  - Poorly written proposals
  - Lack of interest
  - Lack of proportion of LD-Gifted
  - Poor economy

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

- Assistance - Who?
  - Researchers
  - Higher education facilities
  - Library
  - Education resource center/media center
- Assistance - What?
  - Diverse research, materials, information
  - Make available to all who will be involved with program development
  - Well organized, easily understood materials
  - Device system of dissemination
- Resistance - Who?
  - Administrators
  - Administrators of higher ed facilities
- Resistance - What?
  - Lack of research/appropriate research
  - Inavailability of research

Research inappropriate for age group
Research with inappropriate emphasis

AVAILABILITY OF PARENTS
- Assistance - Who?
  - Parents with Gifted/LD
  - Parents active in special education organization
  - Teachers
  - National Organizations
  - Local Organizations
- Assistance - What?
  - Inservice for parents with Gifted/LD children
  - Newsletter to parents concerning Gifted/LD
  - Wider and varied dissemination of knowledge about Gifted/LD to parents
- Resistance - Who?
  - Defensive parents

Resistance - What?
- No monies for inservice training
- Lack of awareness of dual identification
- Parents low educational priorities
- Lack of commitment to dual identification therefore limiting funds

KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSONS
- Assistance - Who?
  - LD Teachers
  - Gifted Teachers
  - Higher education-researchers
  - Administrators
  - National organizations

Assistance - What?
- Provide inservice and conference presentations
- Teach Gifted/LD students
- Promote Gifted/LD programs
- Form Gifted/LD organizations
- Disseminate information

- Resistance - Who?
  - Administrators

Resistance - What?
- Number of years to train
- Lack of properly trained, knowledgeable persons
- No actual evidence of program
- Persons over-extended with varied responsibilities
- Society resistance-deters potential of people training

IMPLICATION OF RESEARCH
- Assistance - Who?
  - LD & Gifted Teachers
  - Researchers at higher education facilities
  - Administrators
  - National organizations

Assistance - What?
- Disseminate information to varied populations
- Evaluate information
- Replicate research

Changing and/or designing programs
Evaluate programs
Impact on daily lives of students
Support from the law

- Resistance - Who?
  Administrators
  Resistance - What?
  Lack of research
  Poor design of research
  Lack of follow through
  Negative attitudes toward research of any kind
  Lack of support for the law

This C.P.S. model was effective in investigating the areas of concern facing professionals in the field of Gifted/LD. Several possible solutions have been proposed for the problem of dual identification. In addition the pros and cons of each solution have been listed by using the C.P.S. Model. For professionals interested in the area of Gifted/LD it is recommended they use the C.P.S. model to further investigate the concerns that we have presented. This manuscript has been concerned primarily with increasing the awareness level toward dual identification of Gifted/LD for educators, administrators, and parents. Logically, in order for appropriate programs to come to fruition for the Gifted/LD students, concerned people must extend the C.P.S. model.

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